

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
October 6 - 13, 2011

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1. Obama: U.S. Commitment to South Korea "Will Never Waver" (10-13-2011)

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama reaffirmed the strong alliance between the United States and South Korea and said both countries are “entirely united” in their efforts to convince North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons program.

Speaking with South Korea’s President Lee Myung-bak at the White House October 13, Obama said that, along with expanded bilateral economic cooperation from the [recently approved free-trade agreement](#), the United States and South Korea are also deepening their security cooperation and their ability to deter threats.

“The commitment of the United States to the defense and security of the Republic of Korea will never waver. And as we have for decades, the United States will maintain our strong presence in the Asia-Pacific, which is a foundation for security and prosperity in Asia in the 21st century,” Obama said.

The president said North Korea “continues to pose a direct threat to the security of both our nations,” and that its leadership faces a clear choice.

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“If Pyongyang continues to ignore its international obligations, it will invite even more pressure and isolation. If the North abandons its quest for nuclear weapons and moves toward denuclearization, it will enjoy greater security and opportunity for its people. That’s the choice that North Korea faces,” Obama said.

President Lee said his country wants to see North Korea become “a responsible member of the international community” and abandon its nuclear ambitions, which he said is “the only way to ensure happiness for its people and to embark on that path to development.”

“North Korea’s continued pursuit of nuclear weapons poses a serious threat to peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula and the world. We will continue to work towards denuclearization of the peninsula,” he said.

Through peaceful and diplomatic efforts, “Korea and the United States will continue to consistently apply a principled approach so that we can achieve our strategic objective,” Lee said.

“When it comes to cooperation between our two governments, we speak with one voice and we will continue to speak with one voice,” he said.

In [remarks with Reuters News Service](#) in Washington October 11, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said the United States and South Korea have been closely consulting and cooperating “to an unprecedented degree” on their approach to Pyongyang.

“We have been willing to remain engaged with the North Koreans on a range of issues that they are following up on,” she said.

The secretary noted that South Korea is a treaty ally of the United States and that it is therefore important for both countries to “stay closely allied” and continue working together on a common approach.

[Remarks by Obama, South Korean President Lee at Arrival Ceremony](#)
[Secretary Clinton’s Remarks at Luncheon for Korean President Lee](#)
[Press Conference by Obama, South Korean President Lee](#)

2. U.S. Efforts in Iraq, Afghanistan Are Succeeding, Panetta Says (10-13-2011)

By Jane Morse
Staff Writer

Washington — Ten years after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, U.S. efforts to weaken al-Qaida are succeeding, says U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta.

At an October 13 hearing before the House Armed Services Committee, Panetta said, “Make no mistake: We are succeeding. Ten years after 9/11 we have significantly rolled back al-Qaida and al-Qaida’s militant allies. We have undermined their ability to exercise command and control and to do the kind of planning that was involved in the attack on 9/11.”

“We are closer than ever to achieving our strategic objectives in Afghanistan and Iraq,” the secretary of defense said.

According to Panetta, the United States is at a turning point — not only in its operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, but for its own military as well.

“As the current mission in Iraq comes to an end, as we continue to transition security responsibility in Afghanistan and as we near the goal of disrupting, dismantling and ultimately defeating al-Qaida, the Department of Defense is also facing a new fiscal reality here at home. As part of the debt ceiling agreement reached in August, the department must find more than \$450 billion in savings over the next decade.”

Even with the resolution of conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. military will face continuing threats from terrorism around the world, including in Pakistan, Somalia, Yemen and North Africa, Panetta said. In addition, nuclear proliferation and cyber-attacks will continue to be dangerous challenges, he said.

Panetta emphasized the need for a military that can remain “agile and deployable” at a smaller size. But he warned: “We absolutely have to avoid a hollow force” — that is, a military that falls short in training and equipment. While announcing changes in the way the U.S. military manages its budget, Panetta cautioned against further cuts to defense funding that hamper the military’s ability “to align resources with strategy.”

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey told the committee that the U.S. military finds itself in “an increasingly competitive security environment.”

“Capabilities that previously were the monopoly of nation-states are now proliferated across the security landscape,” he said. “As a consequence, we must learn faster, understand more deeply and adapt more quickly than our adversaries.”

Dempsey said coalitions and partnerships are more important than ever for sharing security responsibilities and reducing budget pressures. He cited as an example that the U.S. presence on the African continent is part of the U.S. network for building partners and gaining intelligence.

3. Forum for a Nuclear-Free World (10-13-2011)

Rose Gottemoeller, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance
Astana, Kazakhstan

First of all, I would like to thank our gracious hosts. It is such a pleasure to be back in Kazakhstan. Your warmth and hospitality always make visits here so memorable. I made my first trip here back in 1976, as part of one of the first U.S. cultural exchanges to Soviet Kazakhstan. It was a beautiful golden October in the city of apples -- Almaty. Even though it was 35 years ago, I still remember those delicious apples.

The United States and the Republic of Kazakhstan are both committed to the worthy goal of creating the conditions for a nuclear-free world. We both know that the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is central to leading the world toward a diminished reliance on nuclear weapons, reduced nuclear competition, and eventual nuclear disarmament.

As you heard in President Obama’s statement, the U.S. extends its congratulations to Kazakhstan on the twentieth anniversary of the permanent closure of the Soviet nuclear test site located at Semipalatinsk.

This anniversary is a clear reminder that we need to end explosive nuclear testing once and for all. In order to do this, we must ensure that the CTBT enters into force and is universally enforced.

With a global ban on nuclear explosive tests, states interested in pursuing or advancing their nuclear weapons programs would have to either risk deploying weapons uncertain of their effectiveness or face international condemnation and possible sanctions for conducting nuclear tests.

As President Obama has said, the United States is committed to securing ratification of the CTBT, and we are currently engaging with the United States Senate and the American public on the merits of the Treaty.

Concerns about the verifiability of the Treaty and the continuing safety and reliability of the United States' nuclear deterrent derailed the U.S. ratification process in 1999. Today, with those concerns mitigated we have a much stronger case to make in support of ratification.

Great progress was made toward establishing the Treaty's verification regime in the last decade. Today, the International Monitoring System (IMS) is roughly 85 percent complete and when fully completed, there will be IMS facilities in 89 countries spanning the globe. The Treaty's robust verification regime, supplemented by the national technical means capabilities of Member States, will make it extremely difficult for any state to conduct militarily significant explosive nuclear tests that escape detection.

Further, the extensive surveillance methods and computational modeling developed under the U.S. Stockpile Stewardship Program over the past 15 years have allowed our nuclear experts to understand how nuclear weapons work and the effects of aging better than when explosive nuclear testing was conducted. The United States can maintain a safe and effective nuclear deterrent without conducting explosive nuclear tests.

As we move forward with our ratification process, we call on all governments to declare or reaffirm their commitment not to conduct explosive nuclear tests. We also ask that the remaining Annex 2 States join us in moving forward toward ratification.

It is in this remaining march towards entry into force that we will need Kazakhstan's aid and leadership on this issue. Together we can engage audiences at the government and non-governmental level - we can reach mothers, fathers, students, retirees, government workers, factory workers and farmers. Since explosive nuclear testing affects us all, the goal should be to have people talking about the CTBT in their legislatures and around their kitchen tables. Leading by example, Kazakhstan and the United States can build the momentum needed to bring the CTBT into force.

At the United Nations Article XIV Conference last month, Under Secretary Ellen Tauscher said "we do not expect that the path remaining to entry into force will be traveled quickly or easily...but move ahead we will, because we know that the CTBT will benefit the security of the United States and that of the world."

I know that is a sentiment that Kazakhstan shares and I hope our nations can continue to work together as we move toward our ultimate goal of a world free from the dangers of weapons of mass destruction. Again, thank you for inviting me and for the opportunity to speak.

4. Obama: Iranian Plot a Flagrant Violation of International Law (10-12-2011)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama says an alleged Iranian plot to assassinate Saudi Arabian Ambassador to the United States Adel al-Jubeir and kill Americans in the United States is “a flagrant violation of U.S. and international law.”

Obama telephoned al-Jubeir October 11, shortly after [U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder announced](#) news of the plot and that two men would be charged for their alleged role in it, the White House said.

“President Obama underscored that the United States believes this plot to be a flagrant violation of U.S. and international law, and reiterated our commitment to meet our responsibilities to ensure the security of diplomats serving in our country,” the [White House said in a statement](#). “He also underscored the close partnership between the United States and Saudi Arabia.”

The president also met with his national security team at the White House to thank members for disrupting the plot and for the close coordination between law enforcement and intelligence agencies, the White House said.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said the United States will be consulting with its allies around the world on how best to send “a very strong message that this kind of action, which violates international norms, must be ended.” Clinton called the plot a dangerous escalation of the Iranian government’s long-standing use of political violence and sponsorship of terrorism.

“This is not just, however, about Iran and the United States or even just about Saudi Arabia,” Clinton said in a speech October 12 in Washington. “Targeting an ambassador violates the 1973 Convention on the Protection and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, which of course includes diplomats. Iran is a signatory to this convention.”

Clinton said Iran is also in agreement with U.N. Security Council resolutions that implemented that convention, adding that “this kind of reckless act undermines international norms and the international system.”

She said Iran must be held accountable for its actions, and the United States has increased sanctions on individuals within the Iranian government who are associated with the alleged plot and Iran’s support for terrorism.

“We will work closely with our international partners to increase Iran’s isolation and the pressure on its government,” Clinton said. “And we call upon other nations to join us in condemning this threat to international peace and security.”

Holder told reporters October 11 that agents of the FBI and Drug Enforcement Administration disrupted a plot involving a naturalized U.S. citizen — Manssor Arbabsiar — and members of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to set up a murder-for-hire scheme to target Saudi Ambassador al-Jubeir.

“According to the complaint filed today in the Southern District of New York, Arbabsiar is alleged to have orchestrated a \$1.5 million assassination plot with Gholam Shakuri, an Iranian-based

member of the Qods Force, and other Iranian co-conspirators,” Holder said. The Qods Force is a unit of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

The Qods Force is also suspected of sponsoring attacks against coalition forces in Iraq, and was designated by the U.S. Treasury Department in 2007 for providing material support to the Taliban in Afghanistan and other terrorist organizations, Holder said.

Arbabsiar and Shakuri are charged with conspiracy to murder a foreign official, conspiracy to use a weapon of mass destruction and conspiracy to commit an act of international terrorism, among other charges. Holder said Arbabsiar has been in federal custody since September 29, while Shakuri — who is based in Iran — remains at large.

According to the federal complaint, Arbabsiar met in May with a confidential informant of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in Mexico to set up the alleged assassination plot. A series of meetings followed to set up a plan in which elements of the Iranian government would pay the DEA informant \$1.5 million to murder the Saudi ambassador in Washington, preferably at a local restaurant where Americans would likely be killed.

“The complaint also states that in the days since Arbabsiar’s arrest, he has confessed to his participation in the alleged plot as well as provided other valuable information about elements of the Iranian government’s role in it,” Holder said. Holder told reporters this investigation and arrest were carried out with close cooperation from the Mexican government.

Vice President Biden said in an interview October 12 on ABC Television’s Good Morning America that the United States will make certain “the entire world and all the capitals of the world understand exactly what the Iranians had in mind. It’s an outrage that violates one of the fundamental premises upon which nations deal with one another, and that is the sanctity and safety of their diplomats.”

“They have to be held accountable, and we’re in the process of uniting world public opinion toward continuing to isolate and condemn their behavior,” Biden said.

TREASURY SANCTIONS

The U.S. Treasury Department announced October 11 that sanctions would be imposed against five individuals, including four senior Qods Force officers connected to the alleged plot. The sanctions would also be imposed on the individual responsible for arranging the assassination plot, Treasury said.

Treasury designated Arbabsiar, a naturalized U.S. citizen holding both Iranian and U.S. passports; Qods Force Commander Qasem Soleimani; Hamed Abdollahi, a senior Qods Force official who helped to coordinate aspects of the alleged plot and oversaw other Qods Force officials directly responsible for coordination and planning of the operation; Abdul Reza Shahlai, a Qods Force official who coordinated the operation; and Ali Gholam Shakuri, a Qods Force official and deputy to Shahlai, who allegedly met with Arbabsiar on several occasions to discuss the assassination plot and other planned attacks.

The Treasury Department also designated the Iranian commercial airline Mahan Air for providing transportation, funds transfers and personnel travel services to the Qods Force.

Mahan Air's close coordination with the Qods Force — secretly ferrying operatives, weapons and funds on its flights — reveals another facet of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps's extensive infiltration of Iran's commercial sector to facilitate its support for terrorism, says Treasury Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David Cohen.

"Iran once again has used the Qods Force and the international financial system to pursue an act of international terrorism, this time aimed against a Saudi diplomat," [Cohen said](#). "The financial transactions at the heart of this plot lay bare the risk that banks and other institutions face in doing business with Iran."

5. Secretary Clinton on American Global Leadership (10-12-2011)

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton on American Global Leadership at the Center for American Progress, October 12, 2011, Washington, D.C.

MODERATOR: Good afternoon. Welcome back, for those of you who were with us yesterday evening and this morning. I think we've had a tremendous conference. We're tremendously honored to have a friend, a mentor, an inspiration, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton here with us today. I want to extend a sincere thanks to you, Madam Secretary, for taking this time out of your schedule to join us and deepen our conversation.

So, welcome. Over the past two days, we have looked to our past, and we have looked inward, to what has made our country great and to the challenges we face to build a more perfect union in the years and months ahead.

This morning, Bill Ivey and Jose Andres encouraged us to embrace complexity and connection. And as Secretary Clinton has said, the complexities and connections of today's world have created a new global America moment as well. (Inaudible) things that make us who we are as a nation, our openness and innovation, our determination and devotion to core values, are also more important outside our borders than ever before. This afternoon, we're here to look outward and consider how the American idea we are exploring today matters (inaudible) progress round the globe.

Secretary Clinton, of course, hardly needs an introduction. She was sworn in as the 67th Secretary of State of the United States on January 21st, 2009, after nearly four decades in public service as an advocate, attorney, as a citizen, as a first lady, and as a senator. As first lady, she fought for healthcare reform and for children in working families, and traveled to more than 80 countries around the world as a champion for human rights, democracy, civil society, and empowering women and girls. As a senator, she did something seemingly impossible today as we watch the work of the Senate. She actually worked across the party divide to expand economic opportunity, to make the U.S. stronger and more secure. Her historic campaign for president created 18 billion cracks in the glass ceiling and made it clear to every girl in America today that anyone can be president of the United States. (Applause.)

And of course, as Secretary of State at a moment of great change in the world, Secretary Clinton reasserted and redefined Americans' — America's global leadership and secured it for the 21st century. She saw sustained American leadership as a key to advancing our interest and values and creating a world where more people can live up to their God-given potential, what we at home still call the American dream. She has elevated the role of economics in foreign policy, and transformed the way Americans — America conducts diplomacy and development, using smart power, modernizing statecraft, partnering with new institutions, actors, and emerging powers, and reaching

beyond states to people. She's championed our civilian national security institutions and worked to make them an effective partner with our military. She's America's rock star diplomat.

Secretary Clinton, welcome and (inaudible). (Applause.)

SECRETARY CLINTON: Thank you all. Well, it is wonderful to be here with a lot of familiar faces, and it's also good to see some new ones here on behalf of CAP and the values and ideals that it advocates for and protects and defends. And I want to thank my longtime friend, John Podesta, along with Neera Tanden, and everyone at the Center for American Progress, because this organization has grown dramatically. I remember when CAP was literally just a twinkle in John Podesta's eye. And now, every day, you're contributing to our national debate, and increasingly, the global debate. You're helping those of us in government, which includes quite a few CAP alumni, see the trend lines beyond the headlines. So I thank each and every one of you for being in support of this important mission.

Before I begin to address some of these trend lines that are really part of America's leadership and how we define it and how we promote it, I want to just say a few words about the conspiracy to assassinate the Saudi ambassador in Washington that was directed by elements of the Iranian Government. This plot, very fortunately disrupted by the excellent work of our law enforcement and intelligence professionals, was a flagrant violation of international and U.S. law, and a dangerous escalation of the Iranian Government's longstanding use of political violence and sponsorship of terrorism.

This is not just, however, about Iran and the United States or even just about Saudi Arabia. Targeting an ambassador violates the Convention on the Protection and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, which, of course, includes diplomats. Iran is a signatory to this convention. Iran is also in agreement with the Security Council resolutions to implement it. This kind of reckless act undermines international norms and the international system. Iran must be held accountable for its actions. In addition to the steps announced by the attorney general yesterday, the United States has increased our sanctions on individuals within the Iranian Government who are associated with this plot and Iran's support for terrorism. We will work closely with our international partners to increase Iran's isolation and the pressure on its government, and we call upon other nations to join us in condemning this threat to international peace and security.

Now I want to thank you for thinking about tomorrow, and for devoting this day and many other days as well to discussing the sources of America's greatness, the power of our ideals, and the prospects for our future. At the State Department, we work in an international landscape defined by half a century of exceptional American global leadership, leadership from both parties, rooted in our most precious values, that put the common good first and rally the world around a vision of a more peaceful and prosperous future. Securing and sustaining that leadership for the next half century is the organizing principle behind everything I do. That's because our global leadership holds the key not only to our prosperity and security at home but to the kind of world that is increasingly interconnected and complex. Whether it's opening new markets for American businesses or breaking up terrorist plots or bringing the wars of the last decade to a successful close, we have to be guided by both the responsibilities of leadership and the values that undergird us.

American leadership also continues to be a uniquely powerful force for advancing human freedom and universal rights around the world. Now, I recognize these are difficult times. And as we grapple with significant challenges at home and abroad, many Americans are understandably wondering what lies ahead for their families and for our country. But everything I know tells me

that the United States has the talent and ingenuity to come through our current difficulties and to emerge stronger than ever.

Now, if you live long enough – and I see my dear friend, Sarah Urmand, here – you know we have lived through times of anxiety before. Even when I was growing up, the fear was that we were falling behind the Soviets in technology and ambition. When I began practicing law, our country faced stagflation and oil shocks. When I became first lady, it was outsourcing, a growing deficit, and the apparent decline of American competitiveness. And each time America rose to the challenge before us. Our entrepreneurs and innovators proved the naysayers wrong, our leaders found ways to work together at home and abroad to advance our interests and values around the world. We out-worked, out-innovated, and simply out-competed every rival. And when it mattered most, we put the good of the country ahead of ideology, party, or personal interest.

Today, the sources of America's greatness are more durable than many realize. Yes, our military is still by far the strongest, and yes, good to be reminded, our economy is by far the largest. But our workers are also the most productive in the world, and our universities set the gold standard. Our core values of freedom and opportunity are inspiration still to people everywhere.

Now, you've been talking here about the American middle class, which remains the greatest economic engine in the history of the world and the heart of the American dream. This is where our values, our economic strength, and our global leadership converge. Every country – every country has rich people and poor people. That's the way it has historically been.

But America pioneered something different: a middle class. And generations of American leaders from all walks of life have invested in the middle class, expanded the circle of opportunity, rewarded responsibility and hard work, and focused on the common good. And that commitment made America strong, made us prosperous, and made us exceptional.

The success of the middle class is rooted in the basic bargain that if you work hard and play by the rules, you will prosper; that if you innovate, if you create and build, there is no limit on what you can achieve. Renewing this promise will go a long way towards shoring up America's future, not just here, but everywhere.

Last week, we lost one of our 21st century giants, Steve Jobs. But the American dynamism that he embodied lives on. Somewhere in the United States today, two young engineers are in their garage developing the next great breakthrough – an idea that has the potential to grow into a multibillion dollar business, create thousands of jobs, and change the way people live.

And yet, I feel and sense that there are those among us, and I hear their voices, who are filled with doubt. Well, if I can in any way assuage that doubt, I would like to do so. Because that's who we are and that is what we do. And that is what we represent to the rest of the world. This is a core strength to build on. People everywhere share the hunger for opportunity and the urge to create. And wherever they live, entrepreneurs are not just catalysts for growth, they are catalysts for positive changes. And so they are natural allies to the United States.

In fact, it is easy, here, to forget how important the idea of America really still is to people around the world. Over the past two and a half years, I've traveled more than 600,000 miles, I have visited – I've lost count but I think 90 countries, and I can report that American leadership is both respected and required. President Obama and I hear this when we sit down across the table from foreign leaders in nations big and small. They look to America to help meet so many of the

challenges they are facing, from responding to natural disasters, to resolving ancient conflicts, to spurring sustainable growth.

In the town hall meetings that I hold in so many countries, citizens stand up and talk about the importance of American leadership to their daily lives and their hopes for the future. Now, let me hasten to say they do not always agree with the choices we make. But they recognize that no one else can do what we do. No other nation even comes close to our reach or resolve. And they see what we sometimes miss amid all the noise in Washington: America is, and remains, a beacon of freedom, a guarantor of global security, and a true opportunity society.

Now, we do have real challenges, it's true. But America has the capacity to grow our economy, solve our problems, and continue our global leadership. But this outcome is not inevitable. Last year at the Council on Foreign Relations, I said that the complexities and the connections of today's world have yielded a new American moment that must be seized through hard work and bold decisions – a moment when our global leadership is essential, even if we must often lead in new ways.

A lot has happened in the last 12 months, from revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa, to the death of Usama bin Ladin, to renewed fears over economic default in Europe. And these changes have only reinforced my conviction. Seizing this moment and leading the world in the years ahead will take the clear-eyed choices and commitment to shared service and sacrifice that built our country's greatness, paired with fresh thinking and new strategies that match the circumstances of today.

And yes, there will be real consequences if we fail to live up to our own promise and potential. Our allies will lose confidence, our adversaries will be emboldened, and other powers will start to fill the vacuum. If we retreat from the world, or if we refuse to invest in America's global leadership, our values and interests will be undermined across the board. Our economic recovery will slow and our security will suffer. This is something that America—and I would argue the world – simply cannot afford.

So to meet this challenge and lay the foundation for sustained global leadership for decades to come, the Obama Administration is working to strengthen the sources of American power here at home. We are leading internationally in new ways that fit a time of complex challenges and scarce resources, and we are prioritizing our investment in the areas of greatest opportunity and consequence. Each of these lines of action is critically important.

Now, I will leave the domestic discussion, as painful as that is, to others – (laughter) – except to say that as we debate the choices ahead, we must resist the temptation to turn inward and undercut our leadership by slashing investments in diplomacy and development, which account, after all, for only 1 percent of the federal budget – a small investment that yields – (applause) – that yields outsized benefits to the American people.

It's important to remember that there are serious international consequences to the decisions we make here in Washington. This summer when I was traveling through Europe and Asia as the debt-ceiling crisis dominated the news, some leaders I met were quite unnerved and asked me some very tough questions. Because they count on us, on the United States, for security and stability. And they understand that our leadership abroad depends on our strength at home. That is why the Administration's National Security Strategy emphasizes the link between our investments in education, innovation, and infrastructure, and our ability to project strategic and economic power abroad.

At the same time, we have to find new ways to lead in a changing world. This begins by understanding the current international landscape and the demands it places on American leadership. Today the major powers are at peace, but new regional and global centers of influence are quickly emerging. These countries have benefited from the stability and security long provided by American leadership, and from the dynamic and open global economy that we pioneered and continue to protect. Their rise is a sign that our leadership works, not just for Americans but for people around the world in every country.

Working with these new players in the years ahead, encouraging them to accept the responsibility that comes with influence, and integrating them more fully into the international order is a key test for American diplomacy.

Non-state actors – both good and bad – are increasingly shaping the international affairs agenda, as well from corporations to criminal cartels, from NGOs to multilateral institutions, to individuals using Twitter. Political and technological changes are allowing huge numbers of people around the world to influence events like never before.

Even as power becomes more diffuse, the challenges we face are growing more complex. The financial crisis, climate change, terrorism, these are threats that spill across borders and defy unilateral solutions. As President Obama has said, the old international architecture is buckling under the weight of these new threats.

So in such a complex world, it is no longer enough to be strong. You also have to be smart and persuasive. The test of our leadership going forward will be our ability to mobilize disparate people and nations to work together to solve common problems, and advance shared values and aspirations.

Now, we do this, as my husband likes to say, both through the power of our example and by the example of our power. We lead with purpose, guided by the values enshrined in America's founding documents, the belief that our interests are advanced by widening the circle of peace, prosperity, and opportunity.

We lead with partnership, based on a principle of mutual responsibility, mutual respect, and mutual interest. Because leadership does not have to mean shouldering the burden alone; it means inspiring others to join you in doing the job. And we lead with pragmatism, keenly focused on results that benefit, first and foremost, the American people.

Let me offer an example of how this works in practice. In Libya, we saw a dictator threaten to slaughter his own people after they demanded their universal human rights. The crisis threatened to undermine the democratic transitions underway in neighboring Egypt and Tunisia, and send shockwaves across the region.

We began a diplomatic offensive. And along with our allies, we succeeded in putting in place an arms embargo and economic sanctions that froze billions of dollars worth of assets.

When Qadhafi refused to stop his attacks, we led an effort in the United Nations Security Council to pass a resolution authorizing a no-fly zone in Libya and all necessary measures to protect the Libyan people. The Libyan opposition, the Arab League, and the African members of the Security Council all supported this resolution. Now, Brazil, China, India, and Russia abstained – and yet they did not veto.

Now, when Qadhafi threatened to destroy Benghazi, military action to protect civilians became necessary. And only the United States could quickly and effectively eliminate Qadhafi's air defenses. But we ensured that just 12 days later, NATO would assume command and control of the operation, and the United States moved into a supporting – essential but supporting – role. We continued to provide unique capabilities when necessary, including logistics and intelligence. But other countries, including Arab countries, flew the vast majority of the air missions and put the forces and services on the ground to work with the Libyan opposition.

Now, as you know, it's not yet finished. The battle for Sirte must be resolved. The Libyan people succeeded in ousting a dictator and they are now in the process of forming a new democratic government.

Our strategy in Libya was tailored to specific circumstances and does not represent a one-size-fits all solution. In fact, that's part of what we are arguing, is there are no more one-size-fits-all solutions. We have to be more agile. We have to be smarter in analyzing problems and then seeking ways of addressing them. And we know, of course, that the story in Libya is far from finished, and that a stable democracy is far from assured. But I think we can still look at the successful part the United States played there and draw some important lessons.

Consider the result: President Obama promised that our frontline involvement in the military action would last for days, not weeks, and it did. We promised that no American ground troops would be sent into Libya, and they weren't. Not a single American died and we kept costs down. By building a coalition and sharing the mission, we demonstrated smart and effective leadership, and the approach has two important advantages. First, it is more cost-effective, and therefore, more sustainable. Second, by involving more countries in the common effort, it increases international legitimacy and strengthens the global architecture of cooperation that is crucial to our broader interests.

Now there will be times when the United States will and must act boldly, directly, and alone. The operation in Pakistan that resulted in the death of Usama bin Ladin is a good example. But that is no contradiction. In fact, our ability and willingness to do what is required, alone if necessary, makes us a more credible partner and negotiator. There will also be times when the threats we face will be even more complicated, when legitimate interests will compete, and when we find traditional avenues of cooperation blocked or insufficient. That is the reality of the world in which we live today.

And so American leadership must be as dynamic as the challenges we face. We have to be ready to adapt and innovate, and that might mean leveraging new groups of nations to work on specific issues like the new Global Counterterrorism Forum that we launched just this past September. It might mean going beyond traditional diplomatic channels and engaging directly with civil society and the private sector. And it might mean using the power of technology and markets to attack problems in entirely new ways.

In the 21st century, the most important players in international affairs will be the ones who make things happen, who get results, not those who block progress. And the United States will stand with the problem-solvers because that's who we are. This model of leadership, both forceful and flexible, is designed to help us continue to lead in this changing world. To succeed, we also need to think just as carefully about where and why we lead as how we lead.

For the last decade, our foreign policy has focused by necessity on the places where we face the greatest dangers, and responding to threats will always be central to our foreign policy, but it cannot be our foreign policy. In the decade ahead, we need to focus just as intensely on the places where we have the greatest opportunities. That too must be a hallmark of our leadership. And today, that means engaging with emerging powers, finding areas where our interests align so we can work together. Often these will not be relationships that fit neatly into any category like “friend” or “rival,” but we also have much more to gain from cooperation than conflict and confrontation.

Focusing on opportunities also means supporting the democratic transition sweeping the Middle East and North Africa. We know that the people of the region themselves must be the ones to chart their new course, and that there will be setbacks along the way, but there should be no doubt about the outcome we seek and support – strong and stable democracies that are able to give life to the aspirations of their people and play constructive roles on the world stage.

Probably the greatest opportunities in the years ahead will be found in the Asia Pacific region, which is why we have renewed America’s leadership and preeminent role there. I will speak more about this next month in Hawaii when the United States hosts APEC there. And then President Obama and I will travel to Indonesia, where a United States President will participate for the first time in the East Asia Summit. Now I know that there are those in Washington who discount the value of face-to-face meetings, who discount multilateral institutions, but everybody else in the world invests in them. And if we fail to do so, then we will fail in asserting our power and bringing about our influence.

In Asia and around the world, focusing on opportunities means elevating the role of economics in foreign policy by opening new markets to American exports and attracting new investments to American communities. Our economic statecraft is creating jobs and spurring growth here at home. And I’m delighted that the free trade agreements are up for a vote today, and from what I’m told, are likely to pass. Just look at the new free trade agreement with South Korea. It’s expected to create 70,000 American jobs. And we will be discussing in greater detail what economic statecraft means in a speech I’ll give in New York this Friday.

We also have to work – and you – those of you who know me know that I cannot avoid any speech on American leadership without saying this – we have to work to empower women and girls around the world, perhaps the most – (applause) – consequential long-term opportunities to promote sustainable development, democracy, and economic growth. And we have to change the way we do business in foreign policy so that we use the 21st century tools of smart power to produce results as well.

So as we look to the future, let’s invest in these new opportunities to sustain and secure our global leadership. Half of life is showing up, and that means the United States can’t sit on the sidelines. This is the time to press forward, not to pull back. Leadership is in our DNA; we would do great harm to who we are as Americans if we withdraw. In the last decade, we’ve lived through terrorist attacks, two long wars, and a global financial crisis. Through it all, America remains an exceptional country, exceptional for our creativity and openness that draws people from everywhere here to our homeland, for our unwavering commitment to securing a more just and peaceful world, and for our willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.

President Truman in his first speech to Congress after the death of Franklin Roosevelt said, “Today, the entire world is looking to America for enlightened leadership to peace and progress. Such a leadership requires vision, courage, and tolerance. And it can be provided only by a united nation deeply devoted to the highest ideals.” Well, these words are just as true today, and I am confident

that when it's all said and done, as I told people in Asia, it's not pretty to look at, but eventually, we'll get a debt deal. And I believe that on all these other issues, we will rise to our challenges, we will continue to lead the world, we will make the hard choices necessary to keep the promise of America alive here and across the globe. Thank you for your contributions to ensuring that we do. (Applause.)

MODERATOR: Thank you very much. The Secretary has graciously decided to give us a few minutes. We have a packed schedule, so I think we'll have time for one or two questions. There are microphones in the audience. And if you can please identify yourself and if you have a brief question, that would be great.

QUESTION: Jim Moody. Madam Secretary, a wonderful speech. How do we – in among the – within the context you lay out, which I thought was excellent, how do we balance our commitment to Israel and also take advantage of what's happening in the countries right around Israel and help to lead that in a better course? Thank you.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, first, I think it's absolutely true that our support for Israel is rooted in these very values that I was just speaking about. We have so many of the same values that motivate and inspire us, our democratic traditions, both of which are, as you know, a little noisy and difficult from time to time. So it is part of who we are to be stalwartly, steadfastly supportive of Israel and Israel's security.

And yet, at the same time, we also are trying to see more countries in the region have the same opportunities to experience noisy, messy democracy. So we work closely with Tunisia as its going through its transition. We're working with Egypt. We're obviously trying to support the Libyans as they find their way forward. And we're doing it both by advocating for political reform and economic reform, because we think they go hand and hand. And the real core issue is whether these aspiring democracies will carry through on a reform agenda that will actually deliver results to people. And that is what we're betting on and working towards.

But it is challenging, because we don't have the kind of resources that might have been available in a prior time. I've spoken to this before, but if you look at the opportunities that the Arab Awakening provides, it's really – it's just really unfortunate that we don't have the kind of economic resources that could really be a mini-Marshall Plan, for example. I mean, if you think about the Marshall Plan – and a lot of people don't remember this – it was investing in the private sector in the destroyed economies of Europe. And this could make a huge difference because it would deliver to the private sectors of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and others the capital that they so desperately need to build themselves.

So we see no contradiction. We think that being in favor of democracy and human rights and providing as much support as we can for those who are trying to make this transition is very much in keeping with our values.

QUESTION: Thank you. James Hansen, the NASA scientist, recently said that we invest in our future in building this Keystone pipeline, that it's game over. And I think from a climate change standpoint and an investment in energy and that our resources are going towards fossil fuels as opposed to the economic renewable energy market. Do you have a thought on that? Can you help with that?

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, as you probably know, the State Department is in the midst of a process to determine a recommendation about that, so I can't really speak about it in any detail,

other than to say that we've tried to not only listen to the experts but also listen to people who have opinions and often very well-informed opinions about this particular project. We are also in the midst of soliciting views from the 80 relevant federal agencies that have to comment on the national security aspect of this. So it is a very emotional issue, which I am very respectful of, and people's opinions and feelings are on opposite ends of nearly any spectrum you can name. But what we're trying to do in the State Department is follow the law, first and foremost, pursue the process that we are obligated to pursue, and then make a recommendation based on the evidence as it has been assessed. And we will try to do that by the end of the year.

MODERATOR: I think we have one quick question, and then the Secretary's going to have to leave.

QUESTION: Thank you, Secretary Clinton. I have a question about the Afghan peace and reconciliation process. You said last July – that's last July in Chennai, India, that Pakistan had an essential role and a legitimate interest in the reconciliation process. But given the series of events that have occurred so far this year that have undermined our relationship with Pakistan, and Afghanistan's relationship with Pakistan, how do you see Pakistan's role going forward in the reconciliation process?

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, Maureen, that's a question that I and others have worked with, spend a lot of time analyzing. And I think if you look at the statements of President Karzai since the terrible assassination of former President Rabbani, you can see how he and those around him have struggled with the difficult path forward. How do you end conflict, try to create for the first time in more than three decades a semblance of normalcy for the people of Afghanistan if you don't continue to pursue the peace and reconciliation track?

And we have always said that we wanted to support an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned reconciliation process. And I think after a lot of very deep thought and consideration, President Karzai believes we have to follow through on that, and that it is essential to see whether there is an opportunity within the red lines that we agree upon to bring at least some of the Taliban and related insurgents to the peace table.

Now, it's always difficult in the midst of conflict because we are continuing to kill them, as many as we can, to take them off the battlefield, to try to neutralize them and the role they play in killing Afghans, Americans, and other members of the coalition, and they are continuing to fight us. So there is no agreed upon end point here. We're not saying okay, let's stop everything and talk, because we believe – and I think the evidence is clear on this – that the decision President Obama made on taking office and then the second decision he made to first stop, and then reverse, the momentum of the Taliban, has actually succeeded.

Now, it is a very difficult path forward, and what we are trying to do is, with the Afghans, explore every possible route for any legitimate negotiations. But as we are reminded with the Rabbani assassination, he was meeting with somebody who had convinced everyone all the way to President Karzai that he was there as a legitimate representative of the Taliban to pursue reconciliation, and he was there as an assassin. So there is nothing easy about this for even the Afghans. And it is, after all, their culture, so it is also very difficult to us to try to be supportive of them.

Which brings me to Pakistan. Everybody knows Pakistan has a big stake in the outcome of what goes on across their border, and they are going to be involved one way or the other. And part of what we've done is to continue to push forward on what our expectations are from Pakistan and hold them accountable on a range of issues that we have laid out for them. This is a very difficult

relationship, but I believe strongly that it is not one we can walk away from and expect that anything will turn out better, because I don't believe that will be the case. Therefore, we are deeply engaged in finding ways to enhance cooperation with Pakistan and to further the Afghan desire for a legitimate peace and reconciliation process.

So I'm sure there will be more to see develop in the months ahead, but we're aiming toward two milestones. There's a conference in Istanbul on November 2nd; it's a conference for the region. And the United States put on the table a positive vision for the region because I believe strongly it's not just enough to tell people what we're against – guess what! - we're against terrorism -- but to tell people we're for regional economic integration, we're for opening up borders so that Afghans, Pakistanis, Uzbeks, and others can trade and make money and get into the Indian market as well. So we put forward this vision of the New Silk Road, which we are working very hard on and which there has been a great positive response to in the region. So there's a lot that we're moving simultaneously, as we obviously begin to draw down our troops, as we abide by the schedule set out at the NATO summit at Lisbon, and as we explore with the Afghans what our strategic partnership will be after 2014.

So that's a long way of saying that Pakistan has to be part of the solution, or they will continue to be part of the problem. And therefore, as frustrating as it is, we just keep every day going at it, and I think we make very slow, sometimes barely discernible progress, but we're moving in the right direction. Thank you all.

6. Panetta Cites Progress, Gaps in NATO Defense (10-07-2011)

By Cheryl Pellerin
American Forces Press Service

Brussels — Countries of the NATO alliance must work together to defend common security interests now and in the future, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta said today.

At his final press conference of the Oct. 5-6 NATO defense ministerial, Panetta summarized key issues, praised the alliance and its success in Afghanistan and Libya, and detailed work that is needed to fill gaps in the alliance's military capabilities.

"Security in the 21st century will not be achieved by each nation marching to its own drummer," the secretary said.

"The fiscal austerity our nations are facing and the pressure these budget constraints are putting on defense spending," he added, "make it all the more essential that we have alliances like NATO."

Joining Panetta in NATO Headquarters' Luns Auditorium were Marine Corps Gen. John R. Allen, commander of NATO's International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces Afghanistan, and Navy Adm. James G. Stavridis, supreme allied commander Europe.

In a morning session, the secretary participated in a meeting of ISAF representatives and those of troop-contributing nations to ISAF to discuss the war in Afghanistan.

"General Allen presented a briefing of the situation in Afghanistan to that group, and reviewed the significant progress we've made in NATO's largest effort" and the transition from the coalition to Afghan-led security there, Panetta said.

“It was amazing to look around that room and see all the nations that have contributed,” he added. “... It’s one of the largest coalitions that has come together in this kind of effort.”

Allen’s briefing, Panetta said, made clear that although hard fighting lies ahead before all combat troops are withdrawn from the country by the end of 2014, last year’s surge in forces has created the right conditions for transition.

“And we continue to make great strides in developing and strengthening the Afghan National Security Forces,” the secretary said.

Panetta sent a strong message to the other ministers, he said, that despite the drawdown, the United States will maintain important enablers in northern and western Afghanistan -- including medevac teams, helicopters and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance support -- that are needed to complete the mission.

“In listening to my fellow ministers, I was struck by their shared commitment to carry forward this mission and to build on the significant progress we’ve made,” he said.

“There is also consensus that we are on the right path, we’ve made good progress, and there are hard times ahead,” the secretary added, “but we remain unified in the goal of achieving a stable Afghanistan that can govern and secure itself for the future.”

Another session today focused on the effort in Libya, he said, a “remarkable achievement” that is nearing its conclusion with the fall of the Gadhafi regime.

After the ministerial, Panetta travels to Naples, home of the Allied Joint Forces Command, to meet with NATO commanders involved in Libya operations and receive briefings on that effort.

“While this campaign has achieved its goals and demonstrated NATO’s effectiveness,” Panetta said, “we all must come away from this experience determined to build on these successes and address some of the shortcomings in military capability that were exposed.”

A major theme of the ministerial was the need to ensure that NATO has the military capabilities it needs to successfully operate in the 21st century, even in a time of growing budget constraints, the secretary said.

In advance of the NATO Summit in Chicago in May, Panetta said, the alliance must identify, protect and strengthen the core capabilities NATO needs to meet the kind of missions it is most likely to have over the next decade.

An example of such a capability is missile defense, he said.

Yesterday at the ministerial, Panetta and Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero announced that Spain agreed to port four U.S. Aegis ships at Naval Station Rota to support NATO’s missile defense system, among other things.

“Alongside important agreements recently concluded with Romania, Poland and Turkey,” the secretary said, “this agreement represents a critical step in implementing NATO missile defense.”

The Netherlands agreed on Sept. 29 to upgrade radars on four air defense and commando frigates in support of the missile defense effort.

Another effort addresses the need to bolster NATO capabilities in intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, he said.

The Alliance Ground Surveillance program, or AGS, will allow NATO troops to use advanced radar sensors to perform persistent surveillance over wide areas from high-altitude unmanned air platforms.

“Although we have not resolved the issue of how to fund infrastructure and operations costs, I will leave Brussels hopeful that we can reach an agreement to proceed with the program,” Panetta said.

Steps have been put in place, he added, that will help the alliance reach an agreement.

“Solving this kind of issue is important not only so that we can move ahead with AGS, but also because it is a crucial symbol of alliance cooperation,” he said.

Failure to reach agreement “could hurt the drive for similar cost-effective, multinational approaches -- the kind of smart defense that Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen wants to implement for NATO, he said.

“I appreciate the willingness of my fellow ministers,” the secretary said, “to fight together and defend our common security interests.”

Together, he added, “I believe ... we can build a stronger and more effective alliance for the future.”

7. Panetta Details Guidelines for Ending Libya Mission (10-06-2011)

By Cheryl Pellerin
Armed Forces Press Service

BRUSSELS — Consensus exists among NATO members about how to decide when to end Operation Unified Protector in Libya, based on guidelines that can be used to evaluate conditions on the ground there, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta said today.

At his final press conference of the Oct. 5-6 NATO defense ministerial here, Panetta listed the four guidelines, which ask the following questions:

- What happens in Sirte? This is the hometown of former Libyan leader Muamar Gadhafi and heavy fighting is underway there.
- Does the Gadhafi regime maintain the capability to attack civilians?
- Does Gadhafi maintain command capability with his regime’s remaining forces?
- Are opposition forces able to provide security and confront challenges that may arise?

“The decision there will depend a great deal on the recommendations of our commanders who I think will review those guidelines and come forward with their recommendations as to when the mission ought to conclude,” Panetta said.

Joining Panetta in NATO Headquarters’ Luns Auditorium were Marine Corps Gen. John R. Allen, commander of NATO’s International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces Afghanistan, and Navy Adm. James G. Stavridis, supreme allied commander Europe.

The decision won’t be based on “a set series of precise metrics,” Stavridis said during the press conference. “It’s rather a sense of the situation, and it will follow the guidelines that the secretary laid out.”

The military officers who head the air and sea portions of the Libya operation, he said, are Royal Canadian Air Force Lt. Gen. Charles Bouchard, commander of the NATO military mission in Libya, and Italian Navy Vice Adm. Rinaldo Veri, commander of the Maritime Command for Operation Unified Protector.

Together they will work through the confluence of factors involved in determining the mission’s status and present their views to Navy Adm. Samuel J. Locklear III, commander of the Allied Joint Force Command Naples.

Ultimately the recommendations will be moved into the NATO political sphere for final determination, Stavridis said.

At his own final press conference of the ministerial, NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said the end is in sight for Libya operations.

“Gadhafi’s forces are fighting for a lost cause, the threat to civilians is fading away and the recent positive developments in Libya are irreversible,” he said.

NATO is determined to pursue the operation as long as fighting persists in Sirte, and end the operation as soon as political and military conditions are fulfilled, Rasmussen said.

“We launched Operation Unified Protector to protect the people of Libya,” he said. “We have conducted it in full compliance with our mandate, and I hope we’ll soon be able to end it in coordination with the United Nations and the legitimate legal authorities.

“We did the right thing in the right way and for the right reasons,” he added.

European allies and Canada took on the operation’s leadership and supplied the main effort, Rasmussen said.

“This was new,” he added, “it was welcome and could act as a model for the future.”

Libya’s new leadership faces huge political challenges, the secretary-general said, “but basically we’re confident that the National Transitional Council can manage a peaceful transition to democracy.”

Rasmussen does not foresee a major NATO role after the mission ends, he said.

“It is for the United Nations to take the lead in international efforts to assist the new authorities in Libya, if requested by the National Transitional Council,” he added. “But if we are requested to assist, we stand ready to help.”

In a longer-term perspective, Rasmussen said, “I could foresee that NATO could provide assistance in reforming defense and the security sector if requested by the NTC. We have a lot of expertise in that area.”

“If there’s a request and if there are needs that can be met,” Panetta said, “I think all of us in NATO would have to give serious consideration as to what kind of assistance, what kind of advice, what kind of training could be provided” to help the new leadership provide security to the population.

“If they are to succeed,” he added, “I think the international community, in general, owes it to them to provide whatever help is necessary to guarantee” that success.

Libya’s accomplishment “will be an extremely important signal to other countries in the region,” Panetta said, showing that as a result of the Arab Spring, any country can “move in the right direction to secure human rights, implement political and economic reform, and establish a better future for their people.”

8. Iranian Americans: Critical Link Between Washington and Tehran (10-06-2011)

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — Iranian Americans can help improve communication between the peoples of their current and ancestral homelands. A U.S. lawmaker has urged them to step up their outreach to elected officials and their fellow Americans to help increase American understanding of Iran’s society and politics.

Speaking October 3 at the National Iranian American Council (NIAC) conference in Washington, Congressman Jim Moran of Virginia said that for most Americans, Iran’s President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei are “the face of Iran,” but as many Iranian Americans can attest, “that’s not what Iran is.”

“We need to understand that there are a whole lot of other people in Iran that we need to be dealing with, and have a much more sophisticated and expansive relationship with, and that’s the kind of relationship we can really only generate with Iranian Americans,” Moran said.

NIAC, a Washington-based nonprofit organization that works to advance the interests of Iranian Americans, invited community members from across the country to attend a three-day leadership conference where they could see and learn how U.S. government decisions are made.

Moran cited a poll by Zogby International that showed six in 10 Iranian Americans have immediate family members in Iran, while seven in 10 talk to their friends and family in the country several times a month.

Given the more than 30-year break in diplomatic relations between the two countries, most Americans, including their elected officials, “know less about Iran than we do any other large country in the world,” he said.

Moran cited the September 20 remarks by former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen in which Mullen warned that because there are no real channels of communication between Tehran and Washington, “we don’t understand each other.”

Even in “the darkest days of Cold War,” U.S. officials had links to their counterparts in the former Soviet Union, Mullen said. But in the case of Iran, “if something happens ... it’s virtually assured that we won’t get it right, that there will be miscalculations which would be extremely dangerous in that part of the world.”

Moran told NIAC members, “We need to hear from you.” Iranian Americans “should be the source of our most accurate information on what is going on in Iran.”

For example, he said, the U.S.-based community was able to follow the events leading up to the June 2009 presidential election, which Ahmadinejad claimed to have won. Thanks to Iranian-American contacts with their friends and families, “we are able to know beyond dispute that those elections were neither free nor fair,” Moran said.

The June 2009 election and the subsequent wave of protests that swept the country have helped to refocus the community’s priorities, he said.

In a 2008 poll, 54 percent of Iranian Americans said U.S. domestic issues such as the economy and jobs, as well as concerns over discrimination, were deemed a priority, while the U.S.-Iran relationship and internal Iranian issues were cited as being most important to only around one-third of those polled.

“Only a year later, after the Iranian elections, those numbers have flipped. Now a majority cite foreign policy issues ... as most important,” Moran said, adding that the increased interest “is good for our policy community.”

Moreover, he said Iranian Americans are participating in the U.S. political system “at a level that is not seen in most other ethnic and national groups.” He cited a recent survey from Zogby that said four out of five community members are registered to vote.

“That is more than 10 points higher than the general population and it’s almost 30 points higher than the voter registration figures for Muslim Americans,” he said.

Those numbers “should yield political progress” for the Iranian-American community, he said, urging them to be more active in U.S. politics. “Your contribution is needed,” he told the conference attendees.

Moran was asked about how the United States can support the efforts of democratic reformers in Iran without enabling Iranian authorities to discount or repress them by portraying them as the pawns of foreign countries.

The congressman said previous U.S. attempts to provide funding to promote democracy or civil society groups in Iran have backfired, with the money being seen as tainted, or by getting the recipients into trouble.

The most powerful weapon in the U.S. arsenal to promote democracy in Iran is the export of its ideals, which speak to universal values and basic human aspirations, Moran said.

He said statistics provided by the U.S. Library of Congress, which has digitized many of its materials on its website, show that Persian-language speakers are its second largest community of online users.

Moran said the library and other sources are disseminating the ideas that formed the foundation of the U.S. democratic system and have encouraged its continued support for universal rights.

“There are certain ideas that can’t be suppressed or eliminated,” he said.

“People want some spiritual nourishment. Nothing you can do can take that out of a human being. People want the truth. It’s just a universal need. People want justice. People want the ability to speak freely,” Moran said.
